



USNS Comfort (T-AH 20)

Local Address:
USNS Comfort (T-AH 20)
4209 Newgate Avenue, Canton Pier 11
Baltimore, Md. 21224

Deployed Address:
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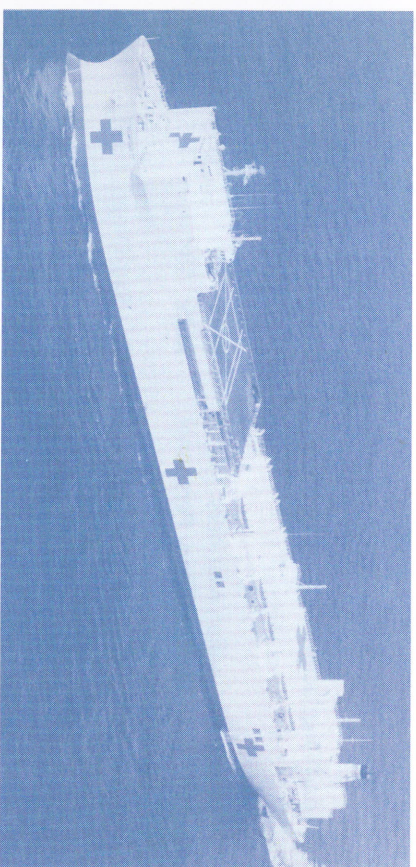
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The U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command
Washington, D.C. 20398-5540

June 2003

Welcome Aboard
USNS Comfort
(T-AH 20)

MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND
Washington, D.C.



CREST

The red cross and life preserver allude to the ship's mission with the ropes of the preserver forming two "X"s indicating the ship's hull number. The demi-sun symbolizes the Kamikaze attack on the previous USS Comfort (AH-6). The dolphins, known as the sailor's friend, are each charged with a star to commemorate the two battle stars received in World War II by USS Comfort. The translation of the Latin words is "Care of the sick on the Sea."



SHIP CHARACTERISTICS

Length 894 feet
 Beam 105 feet, 9 inches
 Draft 32 feet, 9 inches
 Full Load Displacement 69,360 long tons
 Speed 17.5 knots
 Crew Size:
 USNS Comfort Civilian Mariners ROS: 18 FOS: 61
 Embarked MTF Navy Military Personnel ROS: 58 FOS: 1,215
 Delivered to U.S. Navy Dec. 1, 1987
 Converted by National Steel & Shipbuilding Co., San Diego, Calif.

MISSION

USNS Comfort's primary mission is to provide an afloat, mobile, acute-surgical medical facility to the U.S. military that is flexible, capable and uniquely adaptable to support expeditionary warfare. Comfort's secondary mission is to provide full hospital services to support U.S. disaster relief and humanitarian operations worldwide.

EMBARKED MEDICAL TREATMENT FACILITY CAPABILITIES

The Medical Treatment Facility aboard USNS Comfort is one of the largest trauma facilities in the United States and offers a full spectrum of surgical and medical services. Patients arrive aboard primarily by helicopter and sometimes by small boat.

After patients are assessed for medical treatment in casualty receiving, they are routed to surgery or other services depending on the severity of their wounds or medical condition.

Total Bed Capacity	1,000
Intensive Care Beds.....	80
Recovery Beds	20
Intermediate Care Beds	400
Minimal Care Beds	500
Casualty Receiving Stations	50
Operating Rooms.....	12

Comfort has four x-ray rooms and is capable of taking both traditional x-rays and digital x-rays. The ship has one CAT scan unit and maintains up to 5,000 units of blood aboard. The ship also has a dental suite.

Comfort provides a number of support services, including an optometry and lens laboratory, a physical therapy and burn care center, a pharmacy, a medical supply center and a huge laundry facility. The ship's galley is one of the largest galleys afloat, capable of feeding 2,500 patients and crew three times a day.

Comfort has two oxygen-producing plants that compress regular air and run it through a refrigeration unit. The unit then separates the air into liquid oxygen and liquid nitrogen. The nitrogen is dispensed back to the system. The liquid oxygen is stored in one of two 500-gallon storage tanks where it can be heated to produce pure oxygen to refill oxygen cylinders or to supply piped oxygen to acute care areas.

Surgical capability:

- General
- Orthopedic
- Dental
- Cardiac and Thoracic
- Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Plastic
- Neurosurgery
- Maxillofacial
- Ophthalmic
- Ear/Nose/Throat
- Urology

Non-Surgical Medical Capabilities:

- Internal Medicine
- Dermatology
- Dialysis
- Psychiatry
- Respiratory Therapy
- Angiography

Ancillary and Support Services Capabilities:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| - Dental Prosthetics | - Radiology |
| - Lens Fabrication | - Pharmacy |
| - Laboratory | - Blood Bank |
| - Burn Treatment Physical Therapy | - Dietary |
| - Medical Equipment Repair | - Medical Supply |
| - Barber Shop | - Laundry |

HISTORY

USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) is the second of two Mercy-class hospital ships. A converted San Clemente-class supertanker, she delivered to the Navy's Military Sealift Command on Dec. 1, 1987. Comfort essentially has a hospital within a ship. The ship is crewed by civilian mariners, while the hospital, known as the Medical Treatment Facility, is staffed by Navy personnel. The embarked Medical Treatment Facility is under the technical control of the Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. Commander, Military Sealift Command is the program manager for the two hospital ships and the type commander for the ship class.

Comfort is the third ship to bear the name. Previous Comforts (AH-3 and AH-6) distinguished themselves in service during the world wars. AH-6 operated throughout World War II with a Navy crew and Army medical personnel and was awarded two battle stars.

MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

Military Sealift Command, the ocean transportation provider for the Department of Defense, operates about 110 noncombatant Navy ships. In wartime and during other contingencies, that number can expand as additional ships are activated. MSC ship missions vary from the transport and afloat prepositioning of defense cargo to underway replenishment and other direct support to Navy ships at sea to at-sea data collection for the U.S. military and other U.S. government agencies.

REDUCED AND FULL OPERATING STATUS

Comfort is normally maintained in reduced operating status in Baltimore. In reduced operating status, Comfort is maintained by a cadre crew of 18 civilian mariners, and her Medical Treatment Facility is maintained by a staff of 58 Navy military personnel.

When required, Comfort can transition to full operating status in five days. In FOS, the ship's civilian mariner crew is increased to 61. The Military Treatment Facility may be activated to crew a 250-, 500- or 1,000-bed hospital facility, increasing the MTF crew to up to 1,215 Navy personnel.

Navy military personnel who augment the MTF come primarily from shore-based treatment facilities located throughout the eastern seaboard. The FOS commanding officer, his department heads and the first echelon of FOS crewmembers designated to report within 24 hours of activation are based at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md., and other national capital area medical commands.

OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM

On Aug. 9, 1990, Comfort received the call to activate in support of Operation Desert Shield. Civilian mariners from throughout Military Sealift Command, and military personnel from naval hospitals, clinics and other ashore and afloat commands were activated as crewmembers. In all, more than 30 commands were eventually represented. On Aug. 11, 1990, Comfort departed Baltimore and embarked on what was to be an eight-month deployment. The ship arrived on station in the Persian Gulf on Sept. 8, 1990.

During Operation Desert Shield, Comfort operated in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, rotating with the Navy's other hospital ship, USNS Mercy (T-AH 19). During Operation Desert Storm, Comfort was positioned in close proximity to Kuwait and just off the coast of Saudi Arabia. Comfort returned to Baltimore April 15, 1991.

While deployed, Comfort traveled more than 35,000 miles and consumed almost 3 million gallons of fuel. More than 8,000 outpatients were seen, and 700 inpatients were admitted. The MTF performed 337 complex surgical procedures that could not have been done at the available combat hospitals in the Middle East area of operation.

OPERATION SEA SIGNAL

Comfort activated May 24, 1994, to serve as a migrant processing center for Haitian migrants, a mission unique in the history of the U.S. Navy. In addition to basic support services, the MTF aboard Comfort was directed to provide medical support to the processing effort and establish a one operating room, 50-bed inpatient capability.

Comfort's crew was uniquely configured to function as the first-ever U.S. afloat migrant processing center, using 468 Navy personnel reporting from more than 50 separate commands. Two weeks after activation, Comfort sailed from Mayport, Fla., with a total embarked crew of 928 military and civilian personnel.

USNS Comfort arrived at Kingston, Jamaica, on June 10, 1994. Four days later, Comfort received and began processing the first Haitian migrants. Comfort received the order to discontinue processing and sailed for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on July 16, 1994. She returned to her lay-berth on Aug. 19, 1994, in Baltimore.

OPERATION UPHOLD DEMOCRACY

On Sept. 2, 1994, Comfort activated for a second unprecedented deployment. The MTF aboard Comfort provided a 250-bed hospital facility for the 35,000 Cuban and Haitian migrants supported by Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Comfort departed Baltimore and arrived at Norfolk, Va., on Sept. 5, 1994. Comfort left Norfolk on Sept. 11, 1994, with a specially configured crew of 566 personnel. While en route to Cuba, Comfort received orders directing the ship to the coast of Haiti. Seventy-six additional medical personnel boarded the ship Sept. 16, 1994, to support a new mission—providing combat surgical support for U.S. contingency operations in Haiti as part of Operation Uphold Democracy.

Following the diplomatic agreement reached between the United States and Haiti, Comfort took up position off the city of Port-Au-Prince. Comfort served as the first and primary echelon-three medical support facility in the Port-Au-Prince theater of operations. From Sept. 16 through Oct. 2, 1994, Comfort personnel provided both medical and surgical support to U.S. and allied forces ashore and afloat and emergency humanitarian care to injured Haitian citizens. Ship personnel also assisted in an effort to rebuild the local healthcare system. Comfort returned to Baltimore on Oct. 14, 1994.

OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE

Comfort was activated the afternoon of Sept. 11, 2001, in response to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and sailed the next afternoon to serve as a 250-bed hospital facility at Pier 92 in midtown Manhattan.

Comfort arrived Sept. 14 at Naval Weapons Station, Earle, N.J., to load additional supplies and Navy medical personnel. While there, the ship was informed that the crew's mission had changed; Comfort would now be providing logistics services to disaster relief workers. The ship arrived at Pier 92 in Manhattan on Sept. 14. As word about the ship spread, relief workers began arriving over the next few days.

By the time Comfort sailed Oct. 1 to return to Baltimore, the ship had served 17,000 meals to New York City police and firefighters, National Guardsmen, New York State Militia and volunteer relief workers from around the country and the world. The ship had also provided berthing for 2,300 guests and done 4,400 pounds of laundry.

The ship's clinic had seen 561 guests for cuts, respiratory ailments, fractures and other minor injuries, and Comfort's team of Navy psychology personnel had provided 500 mental health consultations to relief workers. Comfort also hosted a group of volunteer New York area massage therapists who gave 1,359 therapeutic medical massages to ship guests.

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Comfort was ordered to activate on Dec. 26, 2002, and set sail for the U.S. Central Command area of operations on Jan. 6, 2003. After stopping in Diego Garcia to embark additional medical personnel flown in from the National Naval Medical Center, the ship proceeded to the Persian Gulf to serve as an afloat trauma center in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Comfort remained in the Persian Gulf for 56 days providing expert medical care to wounded U.S. military personnel as well as injured Iraqi civilians and enemy prisoners of war.

When Comfort returned to Baltimore on June 12, 2003, it marked the completion of a nearly six-month activation. During this time, the ship conducted more than 800 helicopter deck landings to bring aboard personnel, patients and cargo. Comfort's Medical Treatment Facility had also performed 590 surgical procedures, transused more than 600 units of blood, developed more than 8,000 radiographic images and treated nearly 700 patients, including almost 200 Iraqi civilians and enemy prisoners of war.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT COMFORT

- Comfort is designed to receive 300 surgical patients each day.
- Comfort is about as long as three football fields.
- The ship's structure is equivalent to a 10-story building, with a distance of 124 feet from the mast to the water line when the ship is fully loaded.
- The 35,000 tons of sea water used as ballast to stabilize the ship weighs more than the ship itself.
- Each arm of the nine red crosses on the ship is 27-feet long.
- Four distilling plants turn 300,000 gallons of sea water a day into fresh water.
- Comfort has 10 life boats (two capable of evacuating 105 people and eight capable of evacuating 112 people, including 16 litter patients per life boat) and 84 life rafts, each capable of evacuating 25 people.
- Comfort's flight deck is certified to land the world's largest military helicopters, the CH-53D Sea Stallion and the Russian-built Mi18.

AWARDS

Comfort's awards include: Combat Action Ribbon; Joint Meritorious Unit Award; Navy Unit Commendation (two awards); Navy "E" Ribbon (two awards); Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Southwest Asia Service Medal; Humanitarian Service Medal (2); Sea Service Deployment Ribbon and the Kuwait Liberation Medal.